

WFXS: Cranberry Industry Gets Boost

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Wisconsin Rapids - MyFox Wausau - Wisconsin's cranberry industry has been booming in recent years. And part of the reason has been a push for research on the fruit.

Congressman Dave Obey got a first hand look at the progress Monday afternoon. He took a tour of the Ocean Spray plant in Wisconsin Rapids. Congressman Obey and Senator Herb Kohl teamed up to include \$1.25 million in the budget for cranberry research.

"There are 2 kinds of research which needs to be done," Congressman Obey said. "One is market research but the other is very important. It is environmental research so that you understand the impact of this industry on the environment and so you understand how to protect the environment that sustains this industry as well."

Plant managers say part of the money will go towards researching new vines and varieties of berries at Wisconsin farms.

"In 2005 we put in the largest cranberry concentrator and in," explained plant manager Kirk Willard. "Then in 2008, we put in the worlds largest fruit dried cranberry plant. So certainly we're looking forward to receiving more cranberries and processing more cranberries. We certainly have the ability to do that."

It's the first time research funds for cranberries has been included in the federal budget.

Wisconsin's berry crop accounts for 60% of the harvest nationwide. Plant managers say they are equipped to process half the fruit grown in Wisconsin. And these federal dollars are going to help with that.

Original article is located [here](#) .